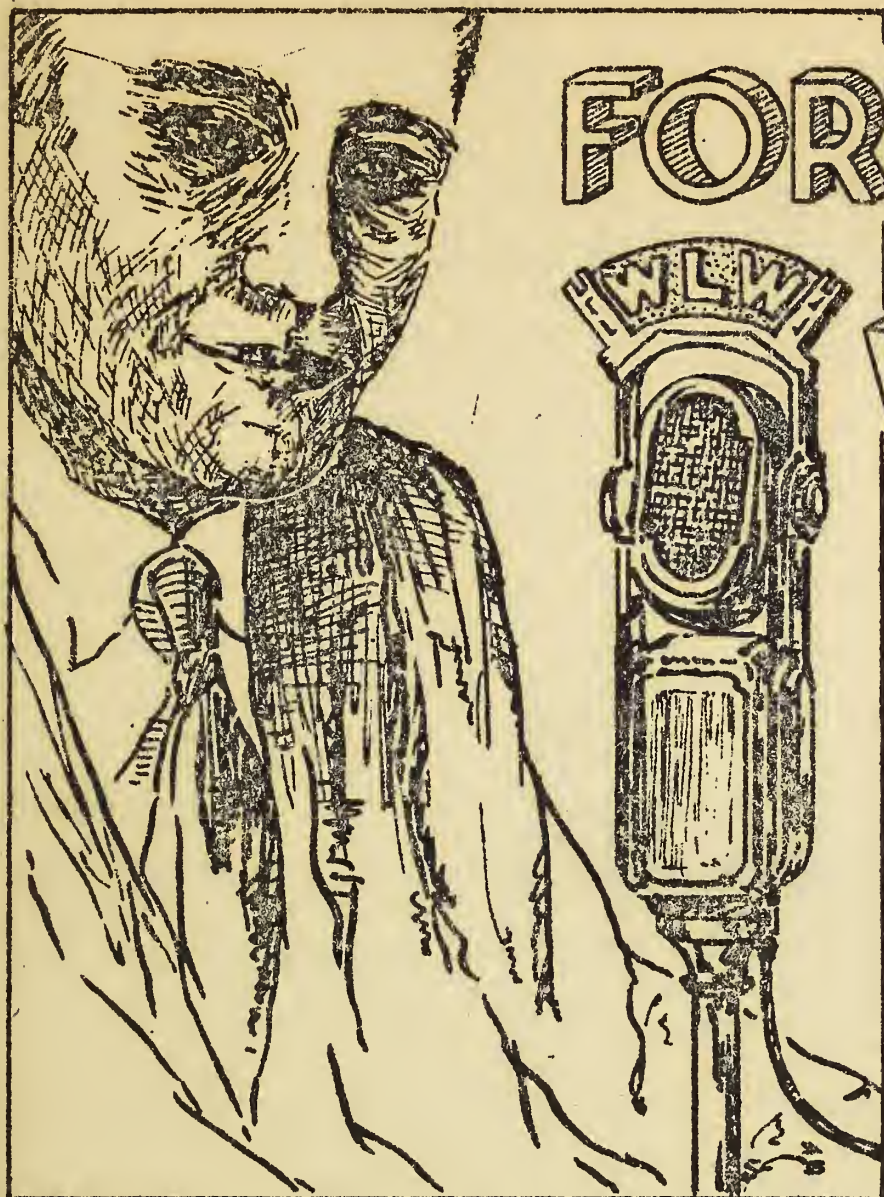


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FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

A Series of
Dramatizations
of Better
Land Use

No. 157 April 26, 1941 1:15 p.m. EST

"SAVING SOIL TO SAVE SOULS"

W·L·W CINCINNATI

United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Dayton · Ohio

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ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

VOICE

We took it for granted that land was everlasting;

We said ownership of the land insured security.

Tools would wear out, men would die --

But the land would remain.

ORGAN: BREAK INTO DISCORDANT CHORD.

ANNOUNCER (cold)

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

Tennessee, the Volunteer State, sprawls from the crest of the Unaka Mountains to the flood plain of the Mississippi, a great agricultural state of dark-fired tobacco and cereal crops, cotton and forest products, hay and livestock. Good farms and poor farms alike are scattered over the Central Basin, the Cumberland Plateau and the Highland Rim. And in the Highland Rim, where Caney Fork moves sluggishly between overshadowing cliffs, is the setting of the 157th consecutive episode of Fortunes Washed Away. It was twenty-six years ago when a young preacher came to White County, Tennessee. His name was Paul Doran, and this is his story -- the true story of the man who saves soil to save souls...(FADE).

NARRATOR

I don't guess many of you folks have ever heard of me, or about some of my people. I'm mighty proud of them, for what they are and what they've done. It was back in 1915 when I rode along the Calfkiller River.

SOUND: Fade in horse walking...

2017-18

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NARRATOR

I'll confess I began to be worried when I approached this little rural parish. Instead of a moderate building, there was a tumble-down shack, with two men whittling on what once were doorsteps. As I came nearer (FADE).

DEACON

Someone's comin' up the trail, Ramhead.

RAMHEAD

Now for the last time! Don't you call me Ramhead! If 'twarn't that we were good...yeah, I hear him now.

SOUND: Fade in horsebeats...

DEACON

There he comes.

RAMHEAD

Why, he's just a young feller.

DEACON

Wonder who it is? 'Pears like a stranger around these parts.

RAMHEAD

We'll soon find out. (BELLIGERENTLY) Howdy, stranger. Just passin' thru, I reckon.

DEACON

Now, Ramhead...

RAMHEAD

Don't you call me Ramhead!

SOUND: Horse stops, saddle noise as man alights...

DORAN

Good morning, brothers.

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
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... of the ...
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DEACON AND RAMHEAD (whispering at each other)

DORAN

Yes, brothers. I take it, from your friend's denotation, that you are Mr. Ramhead.

RAMHEAD (bristling)

Now, listen, stranger...don't you start gettin' funny.

DORAN

I am Brother Paul Doran. I am the new preacher for the circuit here in White County.

RAMHEAD

Oh, I didn't know.

DORAN

Greetings to you both.

DEACON

My name's Tom Newlock. Thomas P. Newlock.

DORAN

I'm glad to meet you, Brother Newlock, And...

RAMHEAD

My name's Whit Willett. Most folks, blast their heads what ought to be bored for the simples, call me Ramhead. But you dassen't!

DORAN

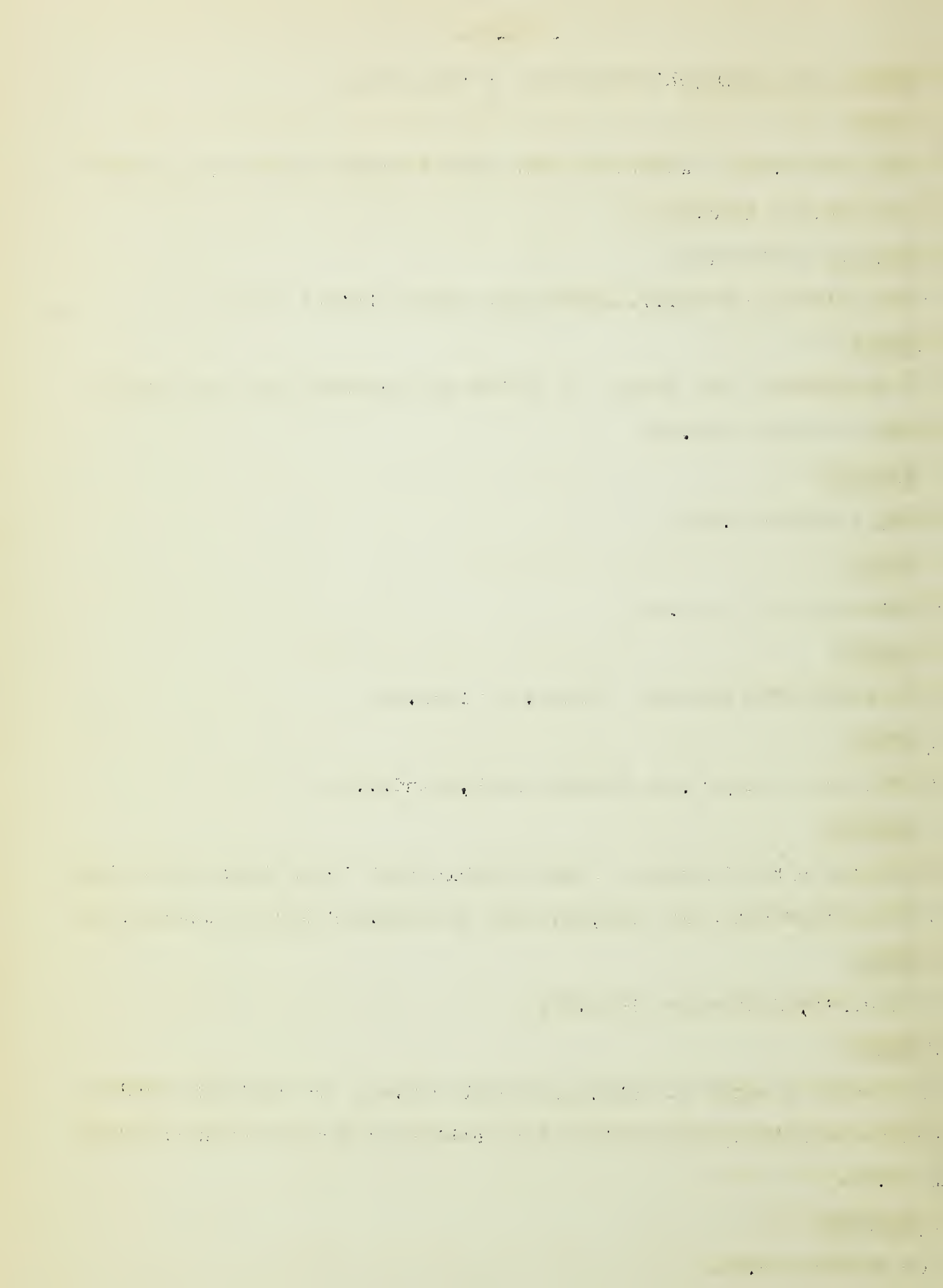
No, I won't, Brother Willett.

DEACON

I reckon I ought to explain, Brother Doran. We call him Ramhead because he's always buttin' into something he don't know nothing about.

RAMHEAD

I don't neither.



DEACON

And they call me Deacon because...well, because I'm one of the deacons of the Blue Spring church. 'Course, 'bout all I do is take the collection box around.

DORAN

I know I can count on you both.

DEACON (hesitantly)

Brother, uh...

DORAN

Brother Doran.

DEACON

Brother Doran, how come you come here?

DORAN

Why...you, a deacon in the church, should ask that?

RAMHEAD (to Deacon)

Yeah...and you call me a ramhead, deacon.

DORAN

I came here to save souls.

DEACON

Do you know much about the background of this circuit?

DORAN

None at all. But I was sent here, and I plan to remain here.

RAMHEAD

Listen...then you don't even know that twenty-eight pastors have served here in the last twenty-five years. Each and every one left as soon as he could get away -- just like you will.

DEACON (softly)

That's what I was trying to tell you, Brother Doran.

The first of these is the fact that the

the second is the fact that the

the third is the fact that the

the fourth is the fact that the

the fifth is the fact that the

the sixth is the fact that the

the seventh is the fact that the

the eighth is the fact that the

the ninth is the fact that the

the tenth is the fact that the

the eleventh is the fact that the

the twelfth is the fact that the

the thirteenth is the fact that the

the fourteenth is the fact that the

the fifteenth is the fact that the

the sixteenth is the fact that the

the seventeenth is the fact that the

the eighteenth is the fact that the

the nineteenth is the fact that the

the twentieth is the fact that the

the twenty-first is the fact that the

the twenty-second is the fact that the

the twenty-third is the fact that the

the twenty-fourth is the fact that the

the twenty-fifth is the fact that the

the twenty-sixth is the fact that the

DORAN

I think I'll stay.

(PAUSE)

SOUND: Very soft clinking of occasional coins being tossed into collection box, once in awhile a soft voice muttering "no, sorry, bless the Lord, etc."

(PAUSE)

NARRATOR

The collections were poor, the attendance was worse. Our main church had only 10 paying members. There were four churches on the circuit, with a total membership of 84. Over half of the school teachers hadn't finished the eighth grade. Children walked to school over muddy roads. There wasn't a mile of improved roads in the entire county. I had to find out what was wrong...(FADE).

ORGAN: Thin, eery sustained note or chord denoting dream....

DORAN (dreaming, and tossing in sleep)

Now I know what is wrong. Weak churches, poor farms, low-grade schools, a discouraged people. At the turn of the century, Tennessee stood first among the southern states in value of timber products. Now the timber has been cut off and sold. The hill-sides have been plowed. No one grows cover crops. Topsoil washes away, income goes down. Lack of income means poor schools, poor churches.

ORGAN: UP SUDDENLY AND OUT.

DORAN

Louise, Louise.

WIFE (awakening from sleep)

Oh..what...what is it?

DORAN

LOUIso, we're going to buy a farm.

WIFE

Oh, you poor dear. You're having a nightmare.

DORAN

No, I mean it!

WIFE

Rest dear, rest. The church is your mission. Now try to sleep.

DORAN

My God, and my church, are my missions. But to improve our people, we must raise their economic level. Don't you see?

WIFE

I...begin to.

DORAN

This county is poor because it has lost so much of its fertility. I'm going to buy a farm -- the poorest farm I can find. I'm going to show that soil erosion can be corrected, and when it is corrected, we'll have a better land to live in!

WIFE

A better land.

(PAUSE)

NARRATOR

The first year I raised only two bushels of corn to the acre. And last year I raised corn in that same field -- but that's going ahead of my story. I set apart two acres back of the church for demonstrational plots. One plot...(FADE)

RAMHEAD

Yeah...here's the one that Brother Doran says is like the way we plow our fields...up and down hill, and corn 'em to death. And those over there...

DEACON

Here's what he says he planted on them.

RAMHEAD

What's it say?

DEACON

Wait a minute, Ramhead...it's...

RAMHEAD

I've warned you for the last time...don't you go callin' me...
what's it say?

DEACON

On these plots over here, he's got soybeans, lesp...lespedeza, crimson clover, and alfalfa. And all of 'em have lime to counter-act the acidity.

RAMHEAD

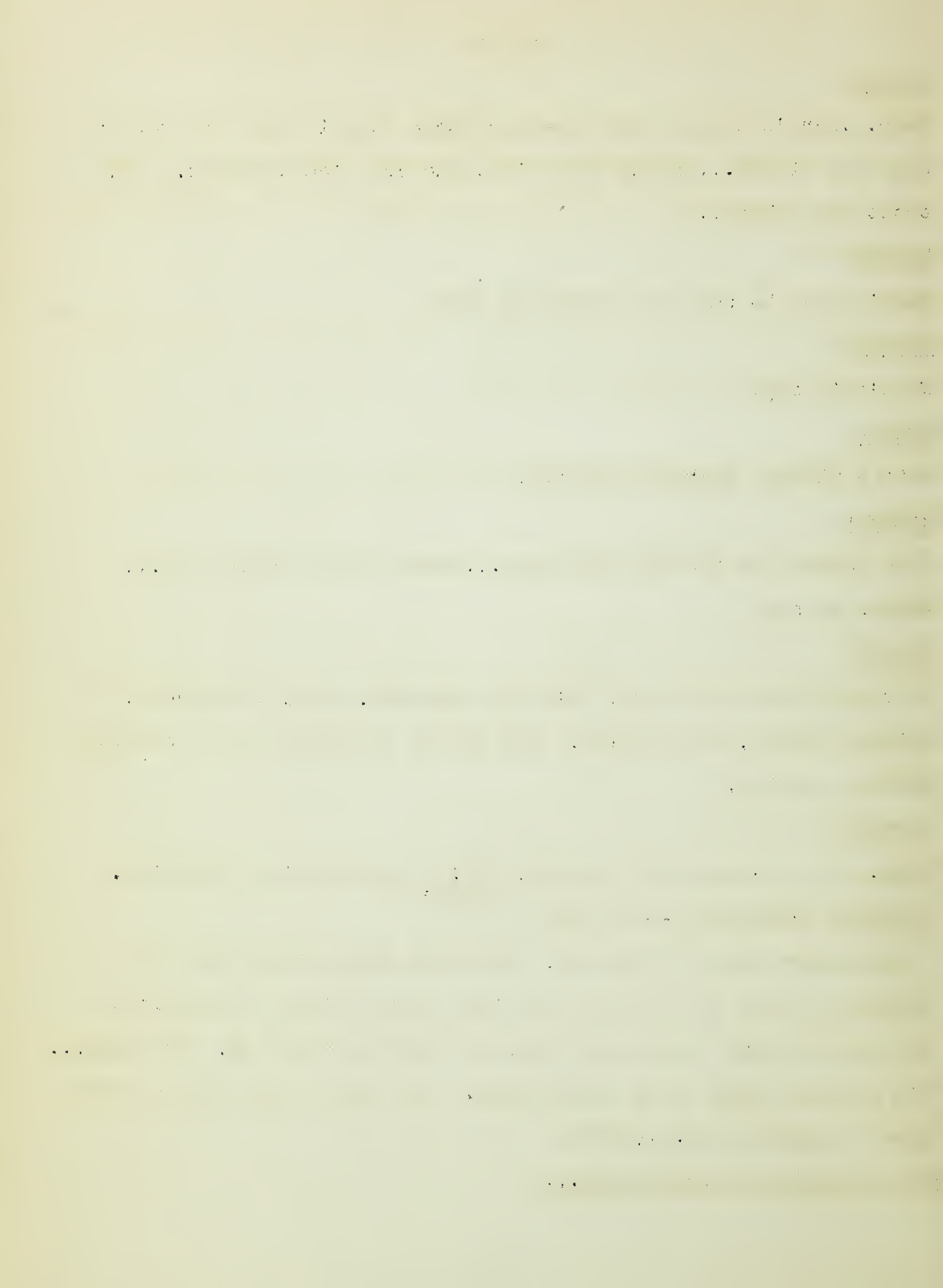
Lime...to con-tract the acidity! My! I am learning something.

(PAUSE)

NARRATOR (chuckling -- on cue)

I just can't keep it from you. The land that raised only two bushels of corn to the acre the first year, raised 73 bushels to the acre in 1940 -- because the soil had been built up. But here... I'm getting ahead of my story again. One day we were at our little home in Sparta, and...(FADE)

SOUND: Clinking of fruit jars...



WIFE

Now, for goodness sakes, Paul...where in the world are you going to put all those jars? First thing, someone will be thinking we're bootlegging.

DORAN

Not if they try to taste this stuff. It's just plain muddy water. Got a place on the cabinet for them?

WIFE

The cabinet's full already. Try the table on the back porch.

DORAN

It's full. Oh, here's a spot.

WIFE

Oh, no you don't! That's where I'm going to put my cake for the Cherry Creek meeting! (SOFTENING) Oh, Paul, I didn't mean to be cross...but what are these jars, anyhow?

DORAN

Why, these jars...

WIFE

That you stole from my pantry.

DORAN

Borrowed, my dear. These jars hold samples of soil from each of the sections of our parish. I've discussed this problem of soil building with every man I could reach, man to man. One man found he could do better with more alfalfa. I took a soil auger with me to one man's farm, and he promised to keep that land in pasture hereafter -- we found his topsoil was getting mighty close to the promised land. One lady has found out that White Leghorns are best for eggs. I talked to this man about Jersey Giants for meat, another about Herefords for beef. Louise, if all of the land of America were handled like it should be, we wouldn't need to worry quite so much about the stability of the church.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC.

NARRATOR

Our farmers are better farmers, now, in White County, Tennessee. Now there are eleven churches with a total membership of 800. The church budget is now 30 times what it was when I came here. There are now 110 miles of improved roads in the parish, where there were none before. Crop yields have more than doubled. If you could have seen the men building the new church at Blue Spring...

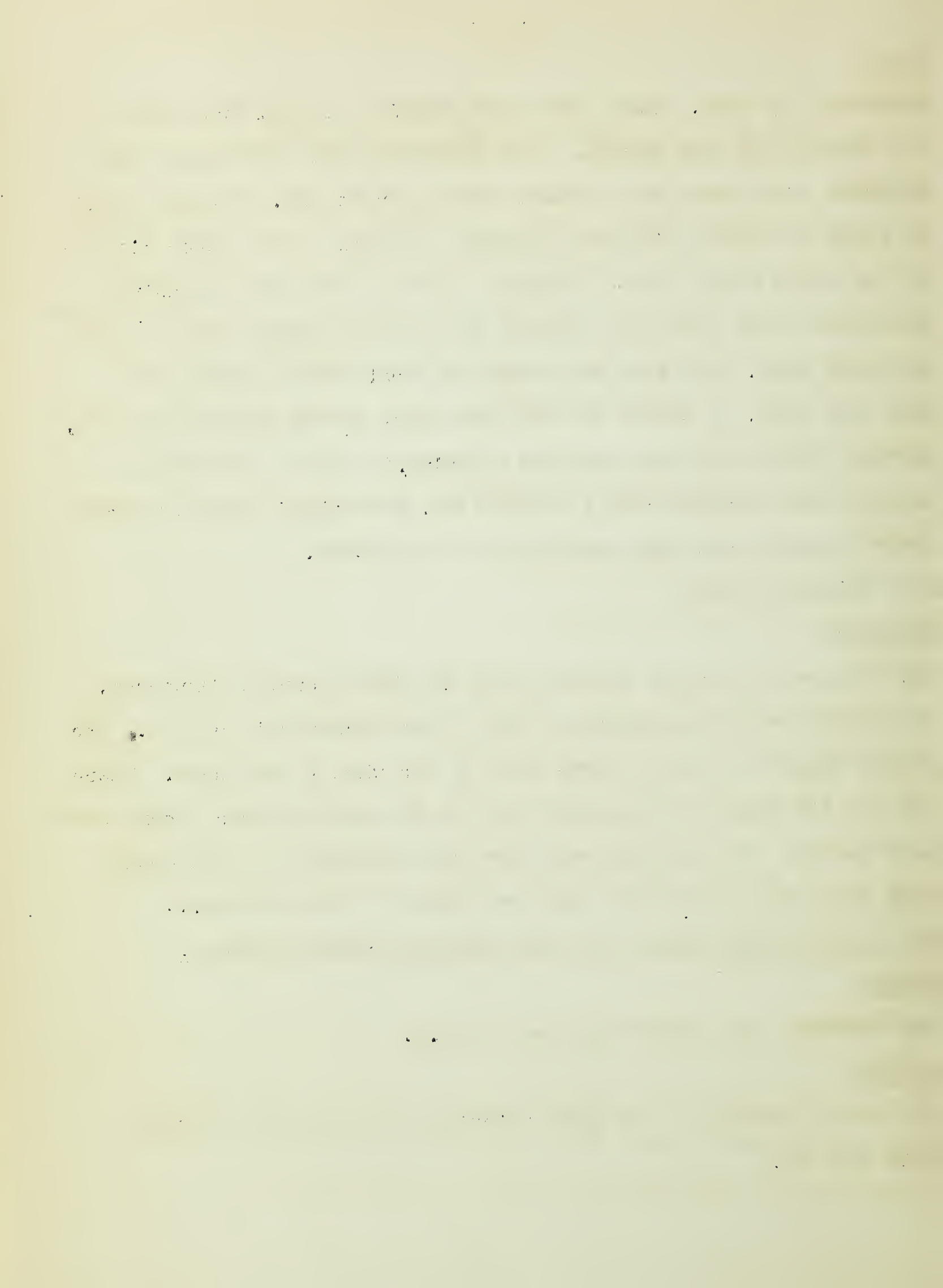
SOUND: Rocks being placed together, general masonry scene...

DEACON

You ramhead! Why didn't you hand that...

RAMHEAD

I'm sorry, Deacon. I was just thinking how beautiful a church this will be.



DEACON

I didn't intend to be cross, Ramhead...I mean Whit.

RAMHEAD

That's all right. Brother Doran has done so much for this county. Here we are, all of us working together, building a church with our own hands. Some have quarried the rock, some have hauled it, and some of us like you and me have put it together. Some paid with produce, some even paid cash.

DORAN (fading in)

....and we mustn't forget the others.

DEACON

Who do you mean, Brother Doran?

ORGAN: Sneak in SYMBOLIC MUSIC.

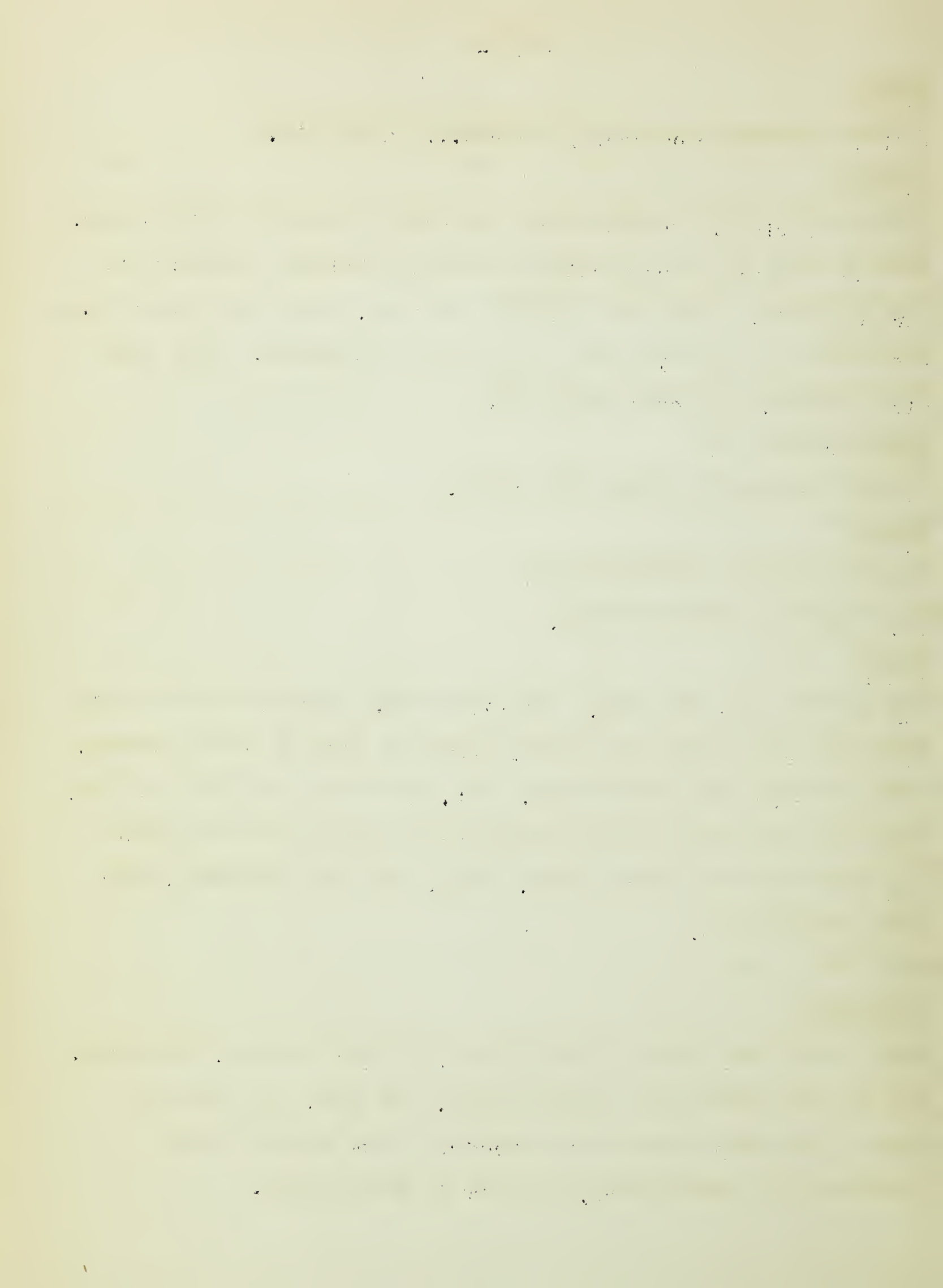
DORAN

The men who farm the soil. Not all of them could be here to help with the actual work, the actual growth of this beautiful church. They are busy with their crops. But, by tilling the soil in a way that will keep those soils productive for those who come after us, they have done their share. They, and their children, will have their reward.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Paul Doran, of White County, Tennessee, the man who saves soil to save souls. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.



JONES

Thanks, _____. It's really remarkable what the Reverend Paul Doran has done to rehabilitate those eroding farmlands -- and remember that when farmlands erode, human erosion follows right along. But this rural parish illustrates rural reconstruction through the church.

ANNOUNCER

And the program here, as I get it, wasn't handed down, but it grew up from within. It began where the people were.

JONES

Exactly. It was built around the needs of the people. And here in White County, Tennessee, the work of this energetic pastor -- a man who didn't leave, but has stayed on for 26 years -- the work of this energetic pastor has kept the people on their own land, with their roots deep in the life of their home communities, active in its churches, and regular in its school. And _____, I want to express my thanks to Ralph A. Felton, of the Drew Theological Seminary, whose article in the current issue of Progressive Farmer magazine, put us on the trail of this interesting -- and true -- story.

ANNOUNCER

Well, Ewing....I imagine that if you only knew where to look, you'd find many a rural pastor who has some sort of a program to rebuild his congregation by rebuilding the soil.

JONES

Oh, yes...although I doubt that many of them have obtained quite the success that Paul Doran has. I know of the Reverend L. A. Zimmerman, of Madison County, North Carolina -- he introduced strip cropping to that hilly section. And Joe Elliott -- he's the Tennessee assistant extension editor -- writes about the Reverend J. G. Blassingame, of Hamilton County, Tennessee. Reverend Blassingame is a combination preacher-farmer, who had a series of sermons on soil conservation in 1939. Smith County, Texas, has found that practically all of the rural churches in the Duck Creek watershed have improved since a soil conservation demonstration area was established there in 1935. And there are others -- I don't know their names -- but a pastor near Paducah, Kentucky, has led several soil conservation meetings, and an old colored preacher at Muskogee, Oklahoma, is making soil-saving a regular feature of his sermons. In a way, _____ all of this reminds me of the so-called "Eleventh Commandment" by Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk. We've read it before, but **it's** worth repeating.

ORGAN: Sneak in DEEP RIVER.

ANNOUNCER

"Thou shall inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

